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Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

Human Rights Council

Explanatory note by the Secretary-General*

The Secretary-General's proposal

1. The establishment of a Human Rights Council would reflect in concrete terms the increasing importance being placed on human rights in our collective rhetoric. The upgrading of the Commission on Human Rights into a full-fledged Council would raise human rights to the priority accorded to it in the Charter of the United Nations. Such a structure would offer architectural and conceptual clarity, since the United Nations already has Councils that deal with two other main purposes — security and development.

2. The Commission on Human Rights in its current form has some notable strengths and a proud history, but its ability to perform its tasks has been overtaken by new needs and undermined by the politicization of its sessions and the selectivity of its work. A new Human Rights Council would help serve to overcome some growing problems — of perception and in substance — associated with the

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Commission, allowing for thorough reassessment of the effectiveness of United Nations intergovernmental machinery in addressing human rights concerns.

3. The Secretary-General proposed the establishment of a Human Rights Council in his March 2005 report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005). The proposal reads:

> "If the United Nations is to meet the expectations of men and women everywhere — and indeed, if the Organization is to take the cause of human rights as seriously as those of security and development, then Member States should agree to replace the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller standing Human Rights Council. Member States would need to decide if they want the Human Rights Council to be a principal organ of the United Nations or a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, but in either case its members would be elected directly by the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. The creation of the Council would accord human rights a more authoritative position, corresponding to the primacy of human rights in the Charter of the United Nations. Member States should determine the composition of the Council and the term of office of its members. Those elected to the Council should undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards." (A/59/2005, para. 182)

4. The Human Rights Council would be **a standing body**, able to meet regularly and at any time to deal with imminent crises and allow for timely and in-depth consideration of human rights issues. Moving human rights discussions beyond the politically charged six-week session would also allow more time for substantive follow-up on the implementation of decisions and resolutions. Being **elected by the entire membership of the General Assembly** would make members more accountable and the body more representative. And being elected directly by the General Assembly — the principal United Nations legislative body — would also have greater authority than the Commission, which is a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. Indeed, according to the Charter, responsibility for discharging the functions under the Economic and Social Council, including the promotion of human rights, is ultimately vested in the General Assembly. **A smaller membership** would allow the Human Rights Council to have more focused debate and discussions.

5. The Secretary-General believes that the Human Rights Council should be **located in Geneva**, allowing it to continue to work in close cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The World Food Council (1974-1995) represents a precedent for a standing Council established by the General Assembly sitting outside New York. Similarly, the International Court of Justice at the Hague represents a principal Charter body located outside New York. While based in Geneva, as a standing body the Council would have the flexibility to "enhance" its presence in New York. Options would include holding special sessions in New York or having specific subcomponents based in New York so as to better interface with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

6. The Secretary-General further elaborated on a proposed new key **peer review function** for the Human Rights Council in a speech to the Commission on Human Rights on 7 April 2005:

> "It should have an explicitly defined function as a chamber of peer review. Its main task would be to evaluate the fulfilment by all States of all their human rights obligations. This would give concrete expression to the principle that human rights are universal and indivisible. Equal attention will have to be given to civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development. And it should be equipped to give technical assistance to States and policy advice to States and United Nations bodies alike. Under such a system, every Member State could come up for review on a periodic basis. Any such rotation should not, however, impede the Council from dealing with any massive and gross violations that might occur. Indeed, the Council will have to be able to bring urgent crises to the attention of the world community."

7. The peer review mechanism would complement but would not replace reporting procedures under human rights treaties. The latter arise from legal commitments and involve close scrutiny of law, regulations and practice with regard to specific provisions of those treaties by independent expert panels. They result in specific and authoritative recommendations for action. Peer review would be a process whereby States voluntarily enter into discussion regarding human rights issues in their respective countries, and would be based on the obligations and responsibilities to promote and protect those rights arising under the Charger and as given expression in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Implementation of findings should be developed as a cooperative venture, with assistance given to States in developing their capacities.

8. Crucial to peer review is the notion of universal scrutiny, that is, that the performance of all Member States in regard to all human rights commitments should be subject to assessment by other States. The peer review would help avoid, to the extent possible, the politicization and selectivity that are hallmarks of the Commission's existing system. It should touch upon the entire spectrum of human rights, namely, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The Human Rights Council will need to ensure that it develops a system of peer review that is fair, transparent and workable, whereby States are reviewed against the same criteria. A fair system will require agreement on the quality and quantity of information used as the reference point for the review. In that regard, the Office of the High Commissioner could play a central role in compiling such information and ensuring a comprehensive and balanced approach to all human rights. The findings of the peer reviews of the Human Rights Council would help the international community better provide technical assistance and policy advice. Furthermore, it would help keep elected members accountable for their human rights commitments.

Issues to be discussed before the September 2005 summit

9. Member States will need to come to agreement on a number of issues in advance of the summit to be held in September 2005. Consultations with the High Commissioner would naturally be part of the process and she is ready to assist. Specifically, the Secretary-General suggests the need for agreement regarding the Human Rights Council on a number of issues as set out below.

Mandate and function

10. In addition to existing functions and responsibilities of the Commission under Economic and Social Council resolutions 1235 (XLII) and 1503 (XLVIII), the

Human Rights Council would consider the situation of all human rights in all countries based on the above peer review system. Until being thoroughly reviewed by the Human Rights Council upon its establishment, the thematic and country-specific procedure mandates, as well as the intergovernmental working groups and the Subcommission, would be requested to report to the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights Council would reconsider and refine or amend those according to its own terms of reference, together with its agenda of work and working methods. The proposed Human Rights Council is only one component of the United Nations human rights system, which includes the mandate of the High Commissioner, secretariat functions and the treaty bodies. In determining the mandate and function of the Human Rights Council, consideration should be given to functions that are best performed at an intergovernmental level, taking into account complementarity with other bodies and bearing in mind the Commission's experience. The Human Rights Council should have the authority to recommend policy measures to other organs of the United Nations that can help in the process of implementation.

11. In addition to the proposed peer review outlined above, the Human Rights Council should also fulfil the following functions:

- Member States should be able to come together and take action when serious human rights situations develop. The Commission is able to do this by having the option to adopt specific country resolutions. While this capacity has attained an unhealthy degree of politicization — which the proposed peer review function of the Human Rights Council should address — the ability to address serious situations must be retained and revived. In addition, the Commission has the capacity to meet in extraordinary session if a majority of members agree; this capacity should be retained by the Human Rights Council, the envisioned format of which would facilitate consideration of urgent situations outside the framework of ordinary sessions. Furthermore, the High Commissioner would benefit from being able to call for action and support from a United Nations standing body with the authority of a full-fledged Council. A forum for dialogue among Member States and involving civil society on human rights issues, should be preserved. The dialogue would allow for constructive engagement on areas of disagreement and creative responses to deal with new and emerging issues, especially human rights problems for which existing international standards are ambiguous. The role of NGOs is crucial to providing policy inputs and views from the field to Member States. Similarly, the increasing prominence and activism of both national institutions and NGOs has elevated their involvement in the human rights debate to centre stage.

- The proposed Human Rights Council should play a pivotal role in overseeing and contributing to the interpretation and development of international human rights law. International law and standards are central to the United Nations system for the protection of human rights; indeed, the body of international human rights norms developed to date by the Commission is perhaps its greatest legacy. As a standing body, the Human Rights Council might find ways to overcome the delays currently faced by the Commission regarding some standard-setting activities. The establishment of a Human Rights Council would also reinforce the critical work of the treaty body system, which has contributed significantly to the development of international law over the past

20 years and could assist in the process of streamlining and strengthening the system to better carry out its mandate.

Composition

12. Instead of being elected by the Economic and Social Council, the membership of the Human Rights Council would be elected by a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly — which would be similar to the election process for Charter bodies. This would reflect the importance accorded to the body. Universality in voting would allow the body to be more accountable to the full membership of the Organization. Member States will need to decide on the length of terms, how Human Rights Council members would be elected and the rotation of members. If Member States choose to elect Human Rights Council members on a regional basis, all regional groups should be represented in proportion to their representation in the United Nations.

Size

13. The Commission on Human Rights currently has 53 members, only one less than the membership of the Economic and Social Council, which elects Commission members. Originally numbering 18 members, the Commission has grown dramatically over the years. A smaller membership on the Human Rights Council would allow more focused discussion and debate. Elevating the status of the Commission into a Council would increase the possibility for States to serve on one of the three United Nations Councils.

Principal or subsidiary body

14. There are two options for creating the Human Rights Council, as a principal organ or as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly. Establishing the Human Rights Council as a principal body of the United Nations would allow it to stand as a peer alongside both the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and would require an amendment to the Charter. Establishing the Council as a subsidiary body of the General Assembly would not require an amendment to the Charter. In either case, the high standard of Charter bodies and "important matters" of a two-thirds majority vote should be retained.

Decision to be taken

15. Upon consideration of the above issues, Member States could agree to endorse, in principle, the establishment of a Human Rights Council in the final declaration of the September 2005 summit. Draft language provided in the report of the Secretary-General reads:

> "Agree to replace the Commission on Human Rights with a smaller standing Human Rights Council, as a principal organ of the United Nations or a subsidiary body of the General Assembly, whose members would be elected directly by the General Assembly by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting." (A/59/2005, annex, para. 8 (e))

Issues to be discussed after the September 2005 summit

16. Further work on how the Human Rights Council would fulfil the outlined functions above, as well as the details regarding size, composition and establishment, would be dealt with in the post-summit phase. Indeed, the fate of many of the Commission's existing functions, procedures and working groups would be left to the Council to endorse, renew or consider obsolete. The special procedures and NGO engagement are two aspects of the Commission that should continue with the Human Rights Council.

17. Another set of issues requiring further elaboration concerns the role and mandate of the Human Rights Council vis-à-vis the other components of the United Nations human rights system, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner, other United Nations agencies and programmes dealing with human rights, the treaty monitoring bodies, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the proposed new Peacebuilding Commission. The creation of the Human Rights Council would reinforce and strengthen the human rights work of those other components. For example, the Human Rights Council would provide an opportunity to rationalize the agenda of the Third Committee of the General Assembly with the work of the Human Rights Council, as well as to strengthen the General Assembly's ability to analyse and draw attention to continuing gaps in the implementation and mainstreaming of human rights throughout the United Nations system. Similarly, the Council could assist in the establishment, support and generation of contributions for various voluntary funds, especially to assist developing countries.

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Peacebuilding Commission

Explanatory note by the Secretary-General*

Background

1. In my report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), I recommended that the Member States agree to the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, designed to fill an institutional gap in the United Nations. The United Nations has played a vital role in mediating peace agreements and assisting in their implementation, thereby helping to reduce the level of war in several regions. However, our record of success in mediating and implementing peace agreements is sadly blemished by some devastating failures. Indeed, several of the most violent and tragic episodes of the 1990s occurred after the negotiation of peace agreements — for instance in Angola in 1993 and in Rwanda in 1994. Roughly half of all countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within five years. These two points drive home the message: if we are going to prevent conflict we must ensure that peace agreements are implemented in a sustained and sustainable manner.

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2. Yet at this very point there is a gaping hole in the United Nations institutional machinery: no part of the United Nations system effectively addresses the challenge of helping countries with the transition from war to lasting peace. My report therefore proposed to Member States that they create an intergovernmental Peacebuilding Commission, as well as a Peacebuilding Support Office within the United Nations Secretariat to achieve this end.

3. My own proposal modified that of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (see A/59/565), based on reactions from Member States, particularly in terms of the appropriate role for the Economic and Social Council in addition to that of the Security Council, and the inappropriateness of the Peacebuilding Commission taking on an early-warning function.

4. I am gratified by the very broad support that this proposal has received among Member States. I believe that achievement in this area would constitute a critically important step in the process of reform of the United Nations. At the same time, many Member States, while accepting the proposal in principle, have requested more detail about the functions of a Peacebuilding Commission. I stated in my report that I would provide a more detailed description of the possible functions. The present explanatory note provides just such a description and suggests possible modalities.

5. I also stated previously that I would undertake further consultations with the international financial institutions. For reasons of timing, it has not been possible to conclude those consultations in advance of Member States' informal consultations within the General Assembly. I nevertheless want to reiterate the importance of full and active participation of the international financial institutions, in a manner appropriate to their governing arrangements, in the work of the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. Further consultations are planned, and I will keep the President of the General Assembly and his facilitators apprised as they progress.

Purposes of a Peacebuilding Commission

6. The Peacebuilding Commission must provide a central node for helping to create and promote comprehensive strategies for peacebuilding both in general terms and in country situations. It should encourage coherent decision-making on peacebuilding by Member States and by the United Nations Secretariat, agencies and programmes. It should support — and not attempt to replace — effective country-level planning for recovery and peacebuilding. It must also provide a forum in which representatives of the United Nations system, major bilateral donors, troop contributors, relevant regional actors and organizations, the international financial institutions and the national or transitional authorities of the country concerned can share information about their respective post-conflict recovery activities, particularly as pertains to achieving coherence between the security/political and development/economic issues, in the interests of greater effectiveness.

7. The core of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission must be in its country-specific activities. Bringing together the critical actors, the Peacebuilding Commission can do four things: it can ensure that the international community as a whole is effectively supporting the national authorities; it can propose overall priorities and ensure that those priorities reflect country-based realities; it can mobilize necessary resources, both for early priorities in recovery and in particular for sustained financial investment over the medium-to-longer-term period of

recovery; and it can provide a forum for ensuring coordination and resolving complications or differences where these emerge.

8. It could play a particularly important role by focusing attention and consolidating good practice on vital cross-cutting issues, such as demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and rehabilitation, for which effective programmes must draw on the capacities and plans of actors across the full range of political-security-humanitarian-development activities.

Functions of a Peacebuilding Commission

1. *In the immediate aftermath of war, provide necessary information to the Security Council and focus attention on development and institution-building efforts necessary for recovery*

9. In contexts in which the Security Council is preparing a post-conflict operation, an early meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission could provide the Security Council with pertinent information about the availability of bilateral and financial institution-funding for early peacebuilding activities relevant to the peacebuilding aspects of integrated missions.

10. The Peacebuilding Commission could also provide a mechanism through which donors could be encouraged to make specific, sustainable commitments to the financing of peacebuilding and recovery activities. It could help to ensure the speedy transition from relief-oriented financing to recovery and development-oriented financing, and help to ensure adequate early attention to and financing for oft-neglected issues, such as building public administration capacity for the rule of law and the delivery of public services.

2. *Help to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities, in part by providing an overview of assessed, voluntary and standing funding mechanisms*

11. As planning for post-conflict operations is undertaken, or at the earliest stages of recovery, the Peacebuilding Commission could review a report that provides an overview of planned financing for peacebuilding through assessed, voluntary and standing funding mechanisms, giving both national authorities and the members of the Commission a chance to identify shortfalls and gaps. Where gaps commonly occur, in the financing of early development activities and the recurrent costs of public administration, a Standing Fund for Peacebuilding could play a targeted and catalytic role.

3. *Periodically review progress towards medium-term recovery goals*

12. At planned intervals (roughly two to four months after the establishment of an operation and then on a quarterly or semi-annual basis), the Peacebuilding Commission (in country-specific format) should meet to review progress towards medium-term recovery goals, especially in the areas of developing public institutions and laying the foundation for economic recovery. Carefully planned meetings of this type, drawing on information and analysis of the United Nations mission, country team and World Bank offices, could provide an opportunity to identify gaps in progress, areas where greater concentration of effort is required, funding gaps etc. Such meetings should not duplicate normal consultative group or similar in-country or country-based donor mechanisms but should focus on critical

links between the ongoing process of stabilization at the military/political level and the underlying process of recovery at the economic/financial/institutional level.

13. Such mid-course reviews could also provide a warning signal to the Security Council and to the international community as a whole if progress is not being made in consolidating the public institutions and the economic foundations for longer-term stability. In the absence of progress on these fronts, the Security Council has at times found itself in the position of not being able to remove peacekeepers or to take countries off of its agenda, for fear of instability and a relapse into conflict. The preferred solution of course is not longer-term duration of peacekeeping presences but more intensive efforts at an earlier stage to ensure that when the military/security situation is adequately stabilized peacekeepers can leave and the foundation is laid for continued stabilization.

4. *Ensure sustained financing of recovery and development activities and extend the period of political attention to post-conflict recovery*

14. The process of developing effective institutions for the rule of law, building State capacity to deliver public services, establishing a foundation for strong fiscal management and support to private-sector activity — these activities normally take considerably longer than the average peacekeeping operation. One of the vital functions of a Peacebuilding Commission must be to ensure that the international community's political and financial attention to recovering countries — which are often fragile and at risk of renewed conflict — continues well past the normally brief duration of a peacekeeping presence. Working with the Economic and Social Council, the Peacebuilding Commission could provide sustained attention as countries move from transitional recovery towards development.

15. The ad hoc post-conflict groups under the Economic and Social Council, formed over the past few years, constituted helpful efforts to perform this function. It is important that we learn from these, which could inform the workings of the Peacebuilding Commission and of the Economic and Social Council. I do believe, however, that a standing body that draws at different stages on the authority of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council will be able to provide a more powerful and consistent system of support.

5. *Prevention*

16. Countries that have been through war in the previous five to ten years are at far higher risk than others of witnessing a relapse of war. Therefore, post-conflict peacebuilding is a critical form of prevention. It is not enough, however. Preventing wars from breaking out in the first instance is a core goal of the entire United Nations system.

17. Neither the Peacebuilding Commission nor the Support Office should have an early-warning function. There are other mechanisms in the United Nations for what has become known as "operational prevention", i.e., the use of such tools as mediation and preventive peacekeeping when conflict has become imminent or has broken out in a small-scale way. These are necessary parts of the United Nations and regional organizations' capacity and should continue to be strengthened.

18. More relevant to the Peacebuilding Commission, however, is the issue of risk reduction. Members of the United Nations should be able **at any stage** to appeal for

advice to the Peacebuilding Commission or for assistance from a Standing Fund for Peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Commission and a Standing Fund for Peacebuilding can add an important dimension to United Nations preventive efforts by providing better tools for helping States and societies reduce the risk of conflict, including by aiding their efforts to build State capacity, especially in the area of the rule of law.

6. *Develop best practice on cross-cutting peacebuilding issues*

19. In issue areas that require extensive collaboration between political/military, humanitarian and development actors, both within the United Nations system and without, the Peacebuilding Commission (in core membership format) could provide an important mechanism for regularizing best practice and agreeing on a division of labour between the respective operational actors.

7. *Improve the coordination of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies*

20. The establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission and Support Office could improve the coordination of United Nations missions and agencies in post-conflict operations in three ways. First, participation by the funds, programmes and agencies in the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office will lead to improvements in planning, as specified below. Second, the various departments, funds, programmes and agencies should participate in the Peacebuilding Commission as part of a single United Nations tea ı, led by a senior official representing the Secretary-General; this too will strengthen a sense of common purpose and joint endeavour. Third, and most important, the Peacebuilding Commission should be used by its members to set common priorities together with the national authorities. This more than anything else can ensure that the various United Nations activities are financed according to common priorities and not, as is too often the case, according to donor-specific or agency-specific priorities.

Functions of the Peacebuilding Support Office

21. For the above functions to work effectively and efficiently, a small but high-quality Peacebuilding Support Office will need to be established. The primary functions of the Peacebuilding Support Office must be threefold:

- To prepare the substantive inputs for meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission, including by gathering and analysing information from members of the Peacebuilding Commission about their respective peacebuilding activities and financial commitments
- To provide high-quality inputs to the planning process for peacebuilding operations, working with lead departments, United Nations field presences and others
- To conduct best practices analysis and develop policy guidance, as appropriate

22. Staff of the Peacebuilding Support Office should have expertise in post-conflict strategy development in several of the substantive areas that form the core of the civilian aspects of post-conflict peacebuilding and in donor mobilization. The Office should pull together a small team with experience of reconstruction at the national level, experience across the range of the United Nations system and exposure to the work of other institutions, such as the international financial

institutions and regional organizations. As noted in my report (A/59/2005), I believe that the Peacebuilding Support Office should contain a dedicated rule of law unit.

Standing Fund for Peacebuilding

23. Several potential donors have expressed strong interest in making contributions of new funds for peacebuilding efforts. I believe a Standing Fund for Peacebuilding to be essential. One option would be the establishment of a voluntary, replenishable fund. Were it in existence, it could provide critical, targeted support to nascent authorities and to early peacebuilding activities. It could help provide sustained attention of the United Nations system beyond the normal cycle of peacekeeping. And it could provide national authorities with vital support for strengthening institutions of the rule of law, national reconciliation processes and similar efforts to reduce the risk of conflict.

24. I will work in the coming months to solidify potential commitments to such a Fund. Any fund should have accountability mechanisms that conform to the highest available standards.

Institutional structure

25. As noted in my report (A/59/2005), I believe that the Peacebuilding Commission would best combine efficiency with legitimacy if it were to advise the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council in sequence, depending on the state of recovery. Simultaneity should be avoided because it will create duplication and confusion.

26. The institutional structure of the Peacebuilding Commission should not alter the formal prerogatives of the principal organs of the United Nations. If the proposal for sequential reporting to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council is agreed, these two bodies would have to work together to identify the modalities for transition between the two. While a given country is on the agenda of the Security Council, the work of the Peacebuilding Commission would have to remain within the purview of that body. However, one of the purposes of the Peacebuilding Commission should be to ensure that (a) adequate early work in transitional recovery is undertaken and (b) the Economic and Social Council has a predictable, effective mechanism for continued support so that early transition from the Security Council is possible. In such matters, the views of the national authorities should be duly taken into account.

Membership

27. As noted in my report (A/59/2005), the Peacebuilding Commission would be most effective if its **core membership** comprised a subset of Security Council members, a similar number of Economic and Social Council members, the major donors to a standing fund for peacebuilding or representatives of the donor community, and some leading troop contributors. The total number of core members should be small, perhaps between 15 and 20 members. Members should have expert knowledge of the issues and it should work by consensus.

28. In its **country-specific operations**, the Peacebuilding Commission should involve the national or transitional authorities, as appropriate, relevant regional actors and organizations, troop contributors, where applicable, and the major donors

to the specific country. The participation of **international financial institutions** is vital. I have started discussions with them to determine how best they can be involved, with due respect for their mandates and governing arrangements. The participation of **regional organizations** is vital. Clearly, regional organizations should participate in the country-specific meetings, as appropriate.

29. **United Nations participation** should reflect the dual (and at times contradictory) goals of (a) improving coordination within the system and (b) ensuring that development actors participate more fully in the deliberations of United Nations political/military processes. I believe this can best be accomplished if United Nations participation in the Peacebuilding Commission is at all times led by a single senior United Nations official representing the Secretary-General, accompanied by other departmental or agency colleagues, as relevant. Of course, the Secretary-General remains responsible and accountable to the membership for the overall coordination and coherence of the United Nations system.

Modalities

30. It is too early to tackle the question of modalities in any detail. If the idea of sequential reporting to the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council is adopted, the Peacebuilding Commission will have to work out modalities with those bodies.

31. Some early ideas about modalities may be useful, however. First, in listening to the deliberations of Member States about the proposed Peacebuilding Commission, it seems clear that the Peacebuilding Commission should be **advisory** in nature. It should provide ideas and inputs to the work of the Security Council and of the Economic and Social Council and interface directly with the Secretariat on peacebuilding matters. With the right participation, the outputs of the Peacebuilding Commission, albeit advisory, would be likely to carry substantial political authority and have an important impact on the work of its members and others.

32. Second, I believe that the core members of the Peacebuilding Commission should meet infrequently, perhaps on a quarterly basis. As core members, they could undertake such functions as reviewing and endorsing best practice in particular issue areas, such as disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, and commissioning independent or internal evaluations. The core membership, together with the bodies with whom it will work, will have to identify appropriate arrangements for chairmanship of both of the core bodies and of country-specific meetings (which might usefully vary, providing opportunities for those most actively engaged in supporting post-conflict efforts in a given case to lead those efforts).

33. Third, as suggested above, I believe that the country-specific meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission might usefully be held at regular intervals: prior to the establishment of the civilian part of a mission or at early stages in the planning process, in this phase meeting fairly frequently; and at later stages of recovery meeting at regular intervals (perhaps quarterly or semi-annually) to assess progress.

34. Fourth, as noted briefly in my report (A/59/2005), I believe that the Peacebuilding Commission should be creative in adopting modalities that allow for flexible participation by national actors, field-based representatives, mission representatives and capital-based representatives, as appropriate. This could involve

different kinds of representation within core and country-specific meetings; use of videoconferencing and related technologies to allow for field-based participation; and meetings outside New York, either in Geneva, the capital city of countries chairing specific sessions, or the country or region under consideration.

35. As part of the overall process, I believe it would be valuable if there were regular, independent evaluation of peacebuilding activities. Several bilateral donors and international financial institutions have instituted regular, rigorous evaluation practices. Within the United Nations system, the humanitarian community has gone farthest in regularly subjecting its operations to rigorous external evaluation. I believe that practice could usefully be adopted by a Peacebuilding Commission.